

BE Wine Tasting – IAP 2007

Introduction

Wine is an alcoholic beverage resulting from the fermentation of grapes or grape juice. The word comes from the Latin *vinum* (related to Greek *οἶνος*) - referring to both "wine" and the "vine". Many factors enter into the production of making a fine wine: the grape, the soil, the geography, the climate, the weather, and the method of making. Good wine has four essential ingredients: alcohol, sugar, acid, and tannin. While wine-like beverages can also be made from other fruits or from flowers or grains, only grapes can supply all of these ingredients naturally. Therefore the word wine by itself always means grape wine. Water makes up to 70-80% of grapes and is obtained by the roots along with trace elements from the soil. The amount of water also dictates how sweet and alcoholic the wine is. The alcohol in wine is formed by the action of yeasts on a variety of sugars. Grapes contain between 0.2 and 1% acid, which is necessary to prevent wine from being flaccid (limp, weak) and to stabilize color and balance. Tannin is one of a number of phenols present in the skin of grapes and pears and in oak and tea leaves; its primary use is a preservative. Since it is found in the skin, red wines have more tannin than white wines.

The optimum age of wine depends largely on the type of wine. Tannic red wines resist oxidation, allowing them to age well, while white wines are best drunk within five years. High sugar or alcohol content also protects wine, which is why wines like sherry or port can last for up to a century or more. Wine is best stored at a constant temperature (50-60°F) in dark conditions where it will not be disturbed, and with the bottle on its side to keep the cork wet on the inside so that oxygen is not allowed to enter.

Elements of Wine:

- Appearance: color, viscosity, clarity
- Nose: aroma or bouquet
- Balance: between alcohol, sugar, acid, and tannin
- Body: flaccid, firm, robust, fat
- Style: light, fruity, fiery, elegant, sparkling
- Finish: after-taste

Please see the glossary for commonly used terms to describe each of these elements.

Whites

White wines may be made from red or white grapes as the skins are not included in the juice that is pressed *prior* to fermentation. Fermentation takes place in either a large vat or oak barrel in a slow, cool (60-70°F) process. The wine is then drained into new wood barrels and left to clarify for 6-18 months before bottling. Wine that is still cloudy must be fined (suspended particles are precipitated using protein or powders).

White wine should be served slightly chilled, in small, narrow glasses in order to minimize oxidation.

S.A. Prüm Essence Riesling 2005

Region: Germany: Mosel-Saar-Ruwer

The Wehlener Sonnenuhr (The Wehlen Sundial) domain in the Mosel Valley is world-famous for its wines. Wine expert and author Frank Schoonmaker describes this growth as "being situated in an unbelievably steep cliff in the middle of which is a square outcrop of slate on which a sun dial has been painted. It is this artifact which gives the best wines from Wehlen their name. Very few wines, if any, are able to compare with them in good years: flacid, balanced, with an almost

supernatural combination of lightness and fulsomeness – perfection itself!” The fact that this place was chosen for the installation of a sundial already shows that this vineyard is blessed by plentiful sunshine.

Another reason for the extraordinary quality of the wines is the “terroir “ or characteristics of the soil which consists of very finely decomposed blue slate dating back to the Devonian era. It is rich in minerals and contains deep-lying aquifers. These veins provide the vines with sufficient water during dry periods, while assuring high quality as a result of stressed vines producing limited yields with strongly concentrated fruit.

Fourth-generation winemaker Raimund Prüm has been part of the movement to simplify German wine labels, especially on more affordable bottlings like this one. Its bold fruit flavors settle into a chalky, minerally finish. The bouquet is aromatic, with scents of apricot and peach. On the palate there are fresh fruit flavors perfectly balanced by a racy acidity and mineral character. Enjoy on its own or with a range of light appetizers and seafood dishes.

CMS White by Hedges 2005

Region: Washington: Columbia Valley

A blend of 44% Chardonnay, 2% Marsanne, and 54% Sauvignon Blanc.

Tasting Notes: Shining, pale gold color and aromas of citrus, gooseberry and pear, with hints of vanilla and fig. On the palate the wine exhibits grapefruit, gooseberry and ripe pear flavors, with some banana, herbal and vanilla notes. The mouth-feel is nicely viscous and is combined with crisp acidity and a long, lingering finish. CMS White is perfect to enjoy with shellfish or as an aperitif alone.

Cellaring: For optimum fruit flavors and refreshing acidity, this wine is best within the first couple of years following harvest.

Production: 100 percent stainless steel fermentation and aging at cool temperatures to retain the maximum fruit aromas and flavors. Fruit was sourced from five Columbia Valley vineyards.

Harvest Notes: 2005 was a banner year in the vineyards. Mostly even temperatures and little wind and rain during bloom made for nice set. The summer was hot, but not too hot, and typical fall ripening conditions of warm days (80-85°F) and cool nights (45-50°F) began in mid-September and continued through October. Warmer site fruit was picked as early as the first week of September and cooler site fruit the last week of October.

Kanu Sauvignon Blanc 2005

Region: South Africa: Stellenbosch

Stellenbosch is an important wine region in South Africa to the east of Cape Town. It is home to the only university of South Africa where both viticulture and oenology can be studied. Although best known for Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Shiraz and Pinotage, Stellenbosch produces a variety of wines including port-style from Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc.

Tasting Notes: This particular wine is pale straw in color with a green tinge. Hints of gooseberry, guava, freshly cut green grass, nettle and green pepper on the nose. Good balance between natural fruit sugars and acid, resulting in a crisp, clean finish. Packed with flavors of bell peppers and crushed rosemary. Drinking well now, but will gain in intricacy with bottle maturation.

Harvest: Grapes were picked between Jan 20 and Feb 14, 2005. The pH at harvest was 3.2-3.5.

Cellar: Only free-run juice was used and reductive winemaking techniques protected the fresh fruit flavours. The must was then cool fermented with a cultured yeast strain. After fermentation the wine spent 3 months on lees, during which time the wine was occasionally stirred. This imparted complexity and structure. The wine was lightly filtered before being bottled. Fermentation temperature: 12 – 15°C. Wood ageing: None.

Aging Potential: Up to four years.

Blend Information: 95% Sauvignon Blanc, 5% Chenin Blanc

Food Suggestions: Serve at 12 – 15°C. Ideal with salads; quiche Lorraine; mussel and perlemoen paella; grilled calamari; fresh line fish; mushroom risotto; chicken a'la king; and stir fried or roasted vegetables.

Reds

Red wines derive their color from the red grape skins that are included in the must (grape juice) during fermentation; they receive their tannins from these skins, which extends their lives. Unlike the whites, the grapes are not pressed until after fermentation, which takes place in a large vat over 2-4 weeks at higher temperatures (80-90°F). The wine is then raked for 1-2 years and then fined if necessary and bottled.

Red wine should be opened 1-2 hours before serving to develop their bouquet and flavor (decanting is another option). It should be served at room temperature in large wide glasses no more than 1/3 full at a time in order to maximize oxidation.

Four Emus Shiraz 2004

Region: Western Australia: Swan District

Bottle Notes: Eddie (Shiraz, red label) is the leader of the flock. Deranged and thoughtful (for the two seconds any emu can hold onto one thought). Eddie is the kind of emu you would hang out with...if you were an emu. South Australia, the heart of Australia. Land of daunting deserts and endless sandy beaches. A place where it's well known outlaws and artists co-exist. Four Emus is proof that heat and coastline can mingle with vines to create wines full of the unique, vivid flavor of South Australia. Emus – The rock-stars of the outback. Emus are berserk. They run fast, play hard, and, to be honest, we admire their insanity. Rich, dark red in color, the Four Emus Shiraz exhibits rich inky plum aromas and toasty oak. The wine is rich, rounded and juicy with soft, voluptuous tannins.

Fruit for this Shiraz was sourced from a number of vineyards in South Australia. This wine over delivers with full fruit flavors, and is an easy drinking style that is suited to many dishes.

Additional Tasting Notes: Lighter style of Shiraz has pretty strawberry and pomegranate fruit character on a lithe frame, lingering nicely. Drink now.

Awards: 89/100 James Halliday Wine Companion 2007 – “A remarkable wine at the price, with quite generous fruit to a light- to medium-bodied frame; soft mouth-feel. Skilled micro-oxygenation at work, one suspects.” Ten of the best value reds under \$10 - James Halliday Wine Companion 2007.

Marqués de Cáceres Crianza 2003

Region: Spain: Rioja

Rioja is the most traditional and prestigious wine region in Spain and is the only denomination in Spain that can claim the title of Denominacion de Origen Calificada.

Tasting Notes: Bright, ruby red color. Lively bouquet with notes of red fruit that add a pleasant freshness softened by a discreet touch of vanilla. Deliciously full in the mouth where well-integrated, silky tannins highlight the wine's fruit. Good length in which the complexity of flavors comes through delicately. An elegant wine and an outstanding vintage.

Food Pairings: A perfect accompaniment to Mediterranean cuisine, fried food, grilled vegetables, pulses, paella and other rice dishes, pasta, fish in tomato sauce, ham, chorizo, beef, and mild or medium matured cheese. Serve at 16-18 C.

Grapes: 85% tempranillo, 15% garnacha tinta & graciano; **Production:** Crianza red wines are aged in oak barrels for 12 months and then in bottle for at least 14 months.

2003 vintage – weather conditions: Heavy rainfall during the winter and spring seasons enabled the soil to restore reserves of moisture. The vines budded nicely in the springtime and then flowered well. The warm weather arrived during the last fortnight in May, becoming hotter during the months of June, July, and August, reaching extremely high temperatures especially during the last two weeks of July and the first fortnight in August. The long period of hot weather and a lack of rainfall up until the ripening season obviously resulted in less bunches of grapes. Taking into account the very intense summer, the unexpected rainfall on Aug 16 and at the beginning of September helped the vegetative cycle of the vines to get back to normal. They harvested on a very gradual basis between Sept 18 and Oct 12 in very favorable weather conditions.

Louis Bernard Côtes-du-Rhône 2003

Region: France: Rhône Valley

Archeological evidence shows that the first vines planted in the Rhône Valley date back to 2,500 years ago. The Rhône did not become a significant producer of wine until the latter part of the 20th century. This appellation accounts for 60% of wine produced in the Rhône region, an area whose production is second in volume only to Bordeaux generic. It extends over 125 miles from Vienna to Avignon.

The varietal that dominates the southern Côtes-du-Rhône is Grenache. Although all wines from this region are blends, it is this particular grape that distinguishes them from wines of other parts of the world. Because of its sensitivity to cooler climates, it is rarely found further north than here. Grenache is a grape with a high level of sugar, and therefore the wine never has trouble attaining a sufficient level of alcohol. It can sometimes be difficult to grow, as it needs eight straight days of nice weather when it is in flower to be properly pollinated. Wines made with the Grenache grape increase in quality when lighter and more aromatic wines from other grapes like Syrah, Cinsault or Mourvèdre are blended with it. Yields are limited to 3.5 tons per acre.

The spectrum of wines created in the Côtes-du-Rhône is broad due to the variation in soils and microclimates within the appellation. Light, fragrant and fruity wines in the Beaujolais style are made here. So are more traditional, powerful wines that are meant to be aged several years before the true harmony of their elements is revealed.

Visual Aspect: Cherry red; **Nose:** Concentrated berries and cherries; **Palate:** Ample and fruity with a gentle hint of oak

Food Pairing: Pasta, white meats, fish and barbecue

Castle Rock Pinot Noir 2005

Region: California: Monterey County – Central Coast

Since its inception in 1994, Castle Rock Winery has built an enviable reputation for producing high quality wines at affordable prices for discerning wine lovers. This winning formula is highly successful as proven by an increasing number of customers and members of the wine press, who have given the wines glowing reviews. The company is one of the fastest growing in the industry, having sold 200,000 cases of wine in 2004, and expecting to sell 250,000 cases in 2005.

Castle Rock's wines are carefully made from grapes grown in the most prestigious areas of the West Coast states - California (Napa Valley, Sonoma County, and Alexander Valley etc.), Oregon (Willamette Valley), and Washington (Columbia Valley). The company has always focused on making wines with specific appellations in order to allow the local qualities of the wine to be appreciated by connoisseurs.

The wines are made and bottled at wineries boasting state-of-the-art equipment, located in Napa Valley, Sonoma County, and Oregon's Willamette Valley. Distribution in all major markets of the United States is through a comprehensive network of fine wine distributors.

Castle Rock is committed to a business practice of keeping overhead costs to a minimum. This means that the company does not employ a large staff of employees, has no elaborate facilities or real estate, and operates with a very modest promotional budget. As a result, funds are channeled to where they can do the most good, into the quality of the wine.

Our Castle Rock Pinot Noir is produced from grapes grown in Monterey County along the Central Coast of California, where the climate and soil quality provide excellent growing conditions for this Burgundian varietal. Here, the cooling air from Monterey Bay helps to produce a longer growing season for grapes, with extra grape-time on the vines leading to a characteristic depth of flavor in the wine. Our Pinot Noir is elegant and medium-bodied, offering aromas of cherry, tea and herbal spice. On the palate, the wine gives flavors of black cherry, plum and spice. It is smooth with a silky texture and mild tannins. This versatile food wine pairs well with lamb, chicken, veal, salmon and light pasta dishes.

Outside Review: The 2005 Castle Rock Pinot Noir is a testament to Gregory Popovich's efforts. The ruby red color is a prelude to the raspberries, candied fruit, rose petals and white pepper on the nose. On the palate, bright strawberry fruit and spice intermingle with a pleasant balance of tannin and acidity. The finish is fleshy and tasty. This wine is a huge winner on the price to quality ratio barometer.....but better than that, it is delicious! Enjoy it as part of a spring barbecue featuring salmon burgers or grilled chicken.

Tenuta di Gracciano Della Seta's Rosso di Montepulciano 2004

Region: Italy: Montepulciano

The Tenuta di Gracciano belongs to the Della Seta Ferrari Corbelli family. The vineyards stand on the Gracciano hills (300 meters above sea level), one of the best areas of Montepulciano. The favorable microclimate, the exposure of the vineyards, and the clay and limestone soil combine to produce a full-bodied yet supple and elegant wine. The careful management of the estate has improved the quality year by year, through a drastic reduction of the yields, and the purchase of new French oak casks for the ageing of the wine.

The Tenuta di Gracciano produces only Rosso and Vino Nobile di Montepulciano from Prugnolo Gentile (a clone of Sangiovese), and a small quantity of Canaiolo, Mammolo, Cabernet

Sauvignon and Merlot. Due to its elegance and smoothness, the Nobile di Gracciano can be drunk after the three years' compulsory ageing, but as time goes by it improves its quality and fully shows its deep richness.

Variety Grapes: 80% Prugnolo Gentile (clone of Sangiovese), 20% Canaiolo, Mammolo, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot.

Vineyards: Rovisci I and Rovisci II; Exposure: South, South-East; Altitude: 300 meters above sea level; Production: 35-40 hl/ha; Vinification: Grapes maceration for 15/25 days, according to the vintage; Ageing: Two years in oak casks of 50 hl from French Massif Central; Maturing in bottle: six months.

Tasting Notes: Its bouquet is intense and complex, with blackberry and spicy aromas. The wine itself is medium-bodied, with cherry-like fruit harmoniously allied to hints of fresh earth and leather. It's tasty and very dry, with a solidly structured core of attractive, mildly tannic fruit.

Food Pairings: Try it with roast meats, pasta with red sauces, or a semi-soft cheese.

Glossary

General Quality

ACID/ACIDITY: Acid -- term used to describe a tart or sour taste in the mouth when total acidity of the wine is high. Acidity -- term used on labels to express the total acid content of the wine. The acids referred to are citric, lactic, malic and tartaric. Desirable acid content on dry wines falls between 0.6% and 0.75% of the wines volume. For sweet wines it should not be less than 0.70% of the volume.

AFTERTASTE: Term used to describe the taste left in the mouth after swallowing the wine. Both character and length of the aftertaste are part of the total evaluation. May be harsh, hot, soft and lingering, short, smooth, tannic, or nonexistent.

ASTRINGENT: Descriptive of wines that have a rough, puckery taste. Usually can be attributed to high tannin content. Tannic astringency will normally decrease with age. However, sometimes the wine fails to outlive the tannin.

BALANCE: Denotes harmonious balance of wine elements - (ie: no individual part is dominant). Acid balances the sweetness; fruit balances against oak and tannin content; alcohol is balanced against acidity and flavor. Wine not in balance may be acidic, cloying, flat or harsh etc.

BIG: The overall flavor of a wine, white or red, that has full, rich flavors. "Big" red wines are often tannic. "Big" white wines are generally high in alcohol and glycerin. Sometimes implies clumsiness, the opposite of elegance. Generally positive, but context is essential - (eg: A Bordeaux red wine shouldn't be as "big" as a California Cabernet Sauvignon).

BODY: The effect on the taster's palate usually experienced from a combination of alcohol, glycerin and sugar content. Often described as "full", "meaty" or "weighty".

COMPLEX: Almost a synonym for "breed". Possesses that elusive quality where many layers of flavor separate a great wine from a very good one. Balance combines all flavor and taste components in almost miraculous harmony.

DECANTING: A method by which cellar-aged bottled wine is poured slowly and carefully into a second vessel, usually a glass decanter, in order to leave any sediment in the original bottle before serving. Almost always a treatment confined to red wines. The traditional method uses a candle flame as the light for

illuminating the neck of the bottle while the wine is passing by. The low intensity of the light is ideal for viewing since it does not strain the eyes. Care must be taken NOT to allow the flame to heat the wine while performing this ritual.

DEPTH, DEEP: Refers to a premium wine that demands more attention, it fills the mouth with a developing flavor, there are subtle layers of flavor that go "deep."

DRY: Dry/Off Dry: Little or no sugar = "dry", slightly sweeter = "off dry".

EARTHY: Covers situations where a "mother-earth" component is present. Earth is soil-dirt, but an earthy wine is not dirty as in "DIRTY" above. The term appears to be applicable to wine thought, by some, to be made from certain young varietal grapes obtained from vines planted on land previously used for growing vegetables containing components which "marked" the soil in some way. European tasters use the term in a broader sense to describe "terroir" characteristics.

FINISH: As in "this wine has a (whatever) finish" or aftertaste

FOXY: Common descriptive word used to note the presence of the unique musky and grapey character attached to native american *Vitis. labrusca* grapes such as the Concord or Catawba varieties. The term "fox" has traditionally been a pejorative name given by grapegrowers to the fruit of a feral, ie. reverted to the wild species, cultivar grapevine. The earliest known reference to a "fox" grape occurs in the first part of the 17th century, specifically applied to cultivated North American grapes, and seems to refer to the unexpected results obtained from planted seeds, a notoriously unpredictable method of reproduction. The word itself may be an early corruption of the french word "faux", (ie. false). Some also claim the word is derived from the french "gout de renard" meaning, in all senses of the phrase, "taste of fox". The aroma and flavors defy verbal description. The best way to imprint "foxiness" in the memory is to mentally compare the flavor of fresh Concord grapes and any fresh California table grape. Most people find the juice or jelly from the Concord grape quite sprightly and delicious. In dry table wines the fermented flavor result is considered by many to be obtrusive and even quite disagreeable.

GRASSY: Slightly vegetal-tasting undertone often part of the overall character of Sauvignon Blanc and certain other grape varietals. European tasters sometimes use the word "gooseberry" to describe this flavor. In minute presence it can enhance flavors. As it becomes more dominant the more it loses appeal leading to unattractiveness.

HARD: High acidity and/or tannin content leading to a sensation of dryness in the mouth, a degree of puckery-ness. Useful for detecting young red wines suitable for aging. Characteristic preferred in dry white wines that will accompany shellfish.

LIGHT: Low alcohol and/or sugar. Since about 1981 a wine containing fewer calories per comparable serving than a regular glass of wine has been legally designated as such. Used as a tasting term, "light" is usually a polite expression meaning "watery".

MUSTY: A wine that displays unpleasant "mildew" or "moldy" aromas. Results from improperly cleaned storage vessels, moldy grapes or cork.

NUTTY: Table wines that have been exposed to air display this aroma which resembles that of certain sherry wines. Considered a flaw by some in red wines, but a desired flavor component in certain white wines by others, (eg: Chardonnays with extended "lees" contact in the fermentation vessel).

RIPE: Favorable adjective bestowed when the varietal characteristics of the grape are optimally present in a well balanced wine. Ripe-tasting wines tend toward being slightly more fruity and sweet than otherwise normal wines.

SOFT: Generally has low acid/tannin content. Also describes wines with low alcohol content. Consequently has little impact on the palate.

SWEET: Refers to one of the four basic tastes detected by the sensory nerves of the human tongue. In the description of wine taste-flavor the term "sweet" is almost always used as an identifier denoting the presence of residual sugar and/or glycerin. Wine aromas require a descriptive term to identify the source of the perceived sensation - (eg: "ripe", "lush").

TANNIN: A naturally occurring substance in grapeskins, seeds and stems. Is primarily responsible for the basic "bitter" component in wines. Acts as a natural preservative, helping the development and, in the right proportion, balance of the wine. It is considered a fault when present in excess.

TART: Synonym for "acidic".

THIN/THIN-BODIED: Opposite of "full-bodied".

Nose

ACETIC: All wines contain acetic acid - (ie: vinegar). Normally the amount is insignificant and may even enhance flavor. At a little less than 0.10% content, the flavor becomes noticeable and the wine is termed acetic. Above 0.10% content is considered a strong fault. A related substance, ethyl acetate, contributes the smell associated with acetic acid content.

APPLEY: Refers to smell or aroma of a wine, usually carrying additional modifiers. "Ripe apples" describes a full, fruity, clean smell associated with some styles of Chardonnay wine. "Fresh apples" does the same for some types of Riesling. "Green apple", however, is almost always reserved for wines made from barely ripe or underripe grapes. "Stale apples" applies almost exclusively to flawed wine exhibiting first stage oxidation.

AROMA: The intensity and character of the aroma can be assessed with nearly any descriptive adjective. (eg: from "appley" to "raisiny", "fresh" to "tired", etc.). Usually refers to the particular smell of the grape variety. The word "bouquet" is usually restricted to describing the aroma of a cellar-aged bottled wine.

CITRUSY: Describes aroma and flavor reminiscent of citrus fruits. Most common is a perception of "grapefruit" content. Most often detected in white wines made from grapes grown in cooler regions of California or other countries.

CORKED: Wine has unpleasant "wet carUser_ACB23Card" taste/smell. Reason is thought to be chemical changes in the wine caused by inadequately sterilized cork stopper inserted at bottling source.

FLINT/FLINTY: Synonym for "stoney". Derived from French phrase "gout de pierre a fusil", literally a smoky, whiff of gunflint, almost acrid taste. These terms are presumably metaphorical approximations based on the flavor sensations allegedly present in wines made from grapes grown on a limestone/silica rich terroir. "Flinty" describes an initial evaluation indicating a young white wine made from cool region grapes under cold fermentation conditions. Characterized by high acidity, a tactile "mouthfeel" that is filling and yet has a flavor sensation that is cleanly "earthy".

FLORAL/FLOWERY

Suggests the aroma or taste, usually aroma, of flowers in wine. "Floral" usually employed as an adjective without modifier to describe attributes of white wine aromas. Few red wines have floral aromas.

FRUITY: A fruity wine has an "appley", "berrylike" or herbaceous character. "Fruitiness" usually incorporates the detection of a little extra sweetness as is found in really fresh grapes or berries.

MADERIZED: Distinctive brown color in wine due usually to period of air exposure. Regarded as synonym for "oxidized". Originates from the taste/appearance of fortified Madeira wines.

POWERFUL: Close to being a synonym for BRAWNY.

TARRY/TARLIKE: Descriptive term used when comparing odor detected in the "nose" of a wine with similar odor retained in a memory trained by the use of a comparison kit of scent essences. Such kits include tar, apricots, mushrooms and other flavoring essences isolated from wines.

VANILLA: Component detectable in the "nose" of a wine. The novice taster can compare odors with the vials of artificial ones provided in kit form.

WOODY: Almost a synonym for OAKY. However, implies an overstay in a wooden container which resulted in the absorption of other wood flavors besides "oak".

YEASTY/YEASTLIKE: Term describing odors deriving from varietal yeasts carried on grapeskins, molds etc. Includes both desirable and undesirable characteristics. Examples would be the presence of "brett", (brettanomyces), a strain of yeast that produces "gamey/smokey" odors that are considered to add to the character of the wine when barely detectable. Considered a flaw when presence is pronounced. Another, similar example is the "dekkera" wild yeast strain which gives a "fresh dirt/cement-y" flavor component.

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